



AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A disposable diaper of a flat type comprising a rear portion that is to be applied to the back of a wearer, a front portion that is to be applied to the stomach of the wearer, and a crotch portion located between the rear portion and the front portion including an absorbent member, the rear portion having a waistband portion oppositely extending from each side thereof, at least one of the waistband portions having a band fastening member near the free end thereof so that the opposite waistbands are fastened together on the front side of the wearer, wherein

a pair of standing gathers are formed on the longer sides of the diaper positioned in spaced parallel relationship to each other along said crotch portion,

a low stiffness region R1 having a bending stiffness of 25 cN/50 mm or lower in the diaper width direction is provided in a region of the crotch portion ~~R~~ having the absorbent member in its thickness direction ~~in the crotch portion~~,

the standing gathers on each side are fixed at an extension ratio of 100% or higher, and the tensile characteristics of the standing gathers on each side measured in their state not fixed to the diaper are such that the tensile load required to extend to an effective extension ratio is 20 to 120 cN and that the increase rate of tensile load required for extending from an extension ratio of 20% up to the effective extension ratio is 1.0 cN/% or lower, the effective extension ratio being 30% lower than the fixing extension ratio.

2. (Currently Amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein said ~~the region of said crotch portion further~~ ~~R~~ has a high stiffness region R2 having a width of at

least 50 mm across the diaper and disposed between laterally separated low stiffness portions and a bending stiffness of higher than 25 cN/50 mm in the diaper width direction.

3. (Currently Amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein the low stiffness region R1 is an oblong region provided along each longer side edge of the absorbent member in ~~the~~ said region of said crotch portion R.

4. (Original) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, which is for an infant, wherein the smallest width of the crotch portion is 100 to 240 mm.

5. (Original) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, which is for an adult, wherein the smallest width of the crotch portion is 150 to 300 mm.

6. (Original) A disposable diaper of a flat type comprising a rear portion that is to be applied to the back of a wearer, a front portion that is to be applied to the stomach of the wearer, and a crotch portion located between the rear portion and the front portion, the rear portion having a wasteband portion oppositely extending from each side thereof, at least one of the wasteband portions having a band fastening member near the free end thereof so that the opposite waistbands are fastened together on the front side of the wearer, wherein

a pair of standing gathers and a pair of leg gathers are oppositely formed by fixing respective elastic members on longer sides of the diaper,

the smallest width of the crotch portion is 100 to 240 mm,

the ratio of the distance W1 between the opposite fixed ends of the paired standing gathers to the distance W2 between the opposite elastic members that are arranged most outwardly in the paired leg gathers, W1/W2 both measured at the smallest width of the crotch portion is 0.67 to 0.81,

the distance W3 between the fixed end of the standing gathers on each side of the diaper and the elastic member that is arranged most outwardly in the leg gathers on the same side of the diaper as measured at the smallest width of the crotch portion is smaller than the width W4 of the standing gathers on each side as measured at the smallest width of the crotch portion,

the standing gathers are fixed at an extension ratio of 100% or higher, and

the tensile characteristics of the standing gathers on each side measured in their state not fixed to the diaper are such that the tensile load required to extend to an effective extension ratio of 20 to 120 cN and that the increase rate of tensile load required for extending from an extension ratio of 20% up to the effective extension ratio is 1.0 cN/% or lower, the effective extension ratio being 30% lower than the fixing extension ratio.

7. (Original) The disposable diaper according to claim 6, wherein the ratio $W1/W2$ is 0.67 to 0.81 over an area extending at least 50mm in the diaper length direction.

8. (Original) The disposable diaper according to claim 6, wherein the distance $W3$ is smaller than the distance $W4$ over an area extending at least 50mm in the diaper length direction.